

NATIONAL LIBERTY MEMORIAL
PRESERVATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6201, the "National Liberty Memorial Preservation Act."

Four hundred years ago, ships set sail from the west coast of Africa and in the process, began one of humankind's most inhumane practices: human bondage and slavery. For two centuries, human beings—full of hopes and fears, dreams and concerns, ambition and anguish—were transported onto ships like chattel, and the lives of many forever changed.

The reverberations from this horrific series of acts—a transatlantic slave trade that touched the shores of a colony that came to be known as America, and later a democratic republic known as the United States of America—are not fully recognized and remain worthy of further exploration. Approximately 4,000,000 Africans and their descendants were enslaved from 1619 to 1865 in the Americas and thereafter in the United States.

The institution of slavery was constitutionally and statutorily sanctioned by the Government of the United States from 1789 through 1865. American slavery is our country's original sin and its existence at the birth of our nation is a permanent scar on our country's founding principles and documents, as well as on the venerated authors of those documents. It is a legacy that continued well into the last century.

The framework for the Constitution and our country to which we all take an oath describes African Americans as three-fifths of a person. The infamous Dred Scott decision of the United States Supreme Court, issued decades later, described slaves as private property, unworthy of citizenship.

And, a civil war that produced the largest death toll of American fighters in any conflict in our history could not prevent the indignities of Jim Crow, the fire hose gatherings, the beatings at lunch counters; and the systemic and institutional discrimination that would follow for a century after the end of the Civil War.

"The mythology built around the Civil War—that victory by the North eradicated slavery and all of its vestiges throughout our nation—has obscured our discussions of the impact of chattel slavery and made it difficult to have a national dialogue on how to fully account for its place in American history and public policy.

While it is nearly impossible to determine how the lives touched by slavery could have flourished in the absence of bondage, we have certain data that permits us to examine how a subset of Americans—African Americans—have been affected by the callousness of involuntary servitude.

By the end of the Civil War, roughly 179,000 black men (10 percent of the Union Army) served as soldiers in the U.S. Army and another 19,000 served in the Navy. Nearly 40,000 black soldiers died over the course of

the war—30,000 of whom died of infection or disease. Black soldiers served in artillery and infantry units and performed all noncombat support functions that sustain an army, as well. Black carpenters, chaplains, cooks, guards, laborers, nurses, scouts, spies, steamboat pilots, surgeons, and teamsters also contributed to the war cause.

There were nearly 80 black commissioned officers. Black women, who could not formally join the Army, nonetheless served as nurses, spies, and scouts, the most famous being Harriet Tubman, who scouted for the 2d South Carolina Volunteers.

Because of prejudice against them, black units were not used in combat as extensively as they might have been. Nevertheless, the soldiers served with distinction in a number of battles. Black infantrymen fought gallantly at Milliken's Bend, LA; Port Hudson, LA; Petersburg, VA; and Nashville, TN. The July 1863 assault on Fort Wagner, SC, in which the 54th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers lost two-thirds of their officers and half of their troops, was memorably dramatized in the film *Glory*. By war's end, 16 black soldiers had been awarded the Medal of Honor for their valor.

In addition to the perils of war faced by all Civil War soldiers, black soldiers faced additional problems stemming from racial prejudice. Racial discrimination was prevalent even in the North, and discriminatory practices permeated the U.S. military. Segregated units were formed with black enlisted men and typically commanded by white officers and black noncommissioned officers.

The 54th Massachusetts was commanded by Robert Shaw and the 1st South Carolina by Thomas Wentworth Higginson—both white. Black soldiers were initially paid \$10 per month from which \$3 was automatically deducted for clothing, resulting in a net pay of \$7. In contrast, white soldiers received \$13 per month from which no clothing allowance was drawn. In June 1864 Congress granted equal pay to the U.S. Colored Troops and made the action retroactive. Black soldiers received the same rations and supplies. In addition, they received comparable medical care.

The black troops, however, faced greater peril than white troops when captured by the Confederate Army. In 1863 the Confederate Congress threatened to severely punish officers of black troops and to enslave black soldiers. As a result, President Lincoln issued General Order 233, threatening reprisal on Confederate prisoners of war (POWs) for any mistreatment of black troops. Although the threat generally restrained the Confederates, black captives were typically treated more harshly than white captives.

In perhaps the most heinous known example of abuse, Confederate soldiers shot to death black Union soldiers captured at the Fort Pillow, TN, engagement of 1864. Confederate General Nathan B. Forrest witnessed the massacre and did nothing to stop it.

Madam Speaker, it is obvious that this chamber needs to pass this legislation to honor these soldiers' lives. Black people's labor and service must be amplified because it often goes intentionally overlooked, and this legislation is key in righting that historical wrong.

I am proud to support this legislation and urge my colleagues to do as well.

HONORING SPECIAL OPERATIONS
SUPERVISOR VINCENT DULESKY**HON. PAUL A. GOSAR**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Mr. GOSAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of one of our finest.

I would like to commemorate Special Operations Supervisor Vincent Dulesky, who passed away on April 1, 2022. Supervisor Dulesky was the head of public affairs at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Yuma Sector Headquarters.

Supervisor Dulesky was born on June 15, 1974 in St. Louis, Missouri. He was a great boxer and earned a college wrestling scholarship. He attended Arizona Western College and the University of Phoenix.

He proudly served this country in the United States Marine Corps. He also worked as a Border Patrol agent in Ajo, Arizona and as a supervisor in Blythe, California.

My office staff met with Supervisor Dulesky a number of times and found him to be very informative and professional. He was cheerful, friendly and down-to-earth, a real man of the people. But what struck them most about Supervisor Dulesky was his sense of duty—the feeling that his profession was more than a job—it was a vocation or calling.

But Supervisor Dulesky was not just a great athlete and superb law enforcement officer. He had a softer side. He bonded with his family through his fandom of the Kansas City Chiefs. He was a farmer, had pet chickens, and loved to cook. And he was constantly smiling and laughing—but always accompanied with an outstretched hand to help.

Especially in these times of crisis on a southern border, the competence and care that Supervisor Dulesky never ceased to exhibit every day will be sorely missed. But nothing can compare to what this loss means for his family.

I would like his loved ones, his beloved wife Barbie, and children, Chloe, 25, Jaden, 19, Delilah, 11, and Gigi, 10, to know that they are in my prayers. Even though I know that they do not need me to tell them this, they should be incredibly proud of their husband and father's service to our country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PATRICK T. MCHENRY

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, due to an unforeseen conflict, I missed Roll Call No. 126. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 126.